The Greek Conceptions of Time and Being in the Light of Heidegger's Philosophy

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# THE GREEK CONCEPTIONS OF TIME AND BEING IN THE LIGHT OF HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY

The idea of time has been a subject of constant reflection. In Parmenides' *On Nature,* time is not discussed as a distinct subject, and yet it plays its role in it. Plato expounded the essence of time in the *Timaeus* (pp. 37-39). Aristotle discussed time more scientifically *(Physics* IV, ch. 10-14). Platonic and Aristotelian ideas of time have never been forgotten in the course of the history of philosophy. Later Greek philosophy and the Scholastic discussion of time equally hinge upon them, either in agreement with them or in reaction against them. In the modern era time has become an indispensable physical concept along Aristotelian lines, from the very birth of science down to contemporary physics. Apart from the physical line, a biological concept of time has been developed. Again another line of research has been the discussion of time from the psychological point of view, analyzing our awareness and consciousness of time. Thus, modern thought deals with the phenomenon of time under the aspect of the separate sciences, in a way remote from ancient philosophy. In the present generation the need has been felt to go back to the phenomena in their original unity. This tendency is apparent in a contemporary philosophical system in which time has been given the central position: the philosophy of Heidegger.

Systematic philosophy stands in connection with historical research: not only is the study of the exposition of problems in Greek philosophy a help for the modern elucidation of these problems, but on the other hand, a creative modern philosopher's view of the phenomena themselves will also elucidate Greek philosophical texts.

The present paper is an examination of Heidegger's interpretation of the Greek philosophy of time in connection with his own views on the subject. For convenience the following three assertions may be formulated.

(1) The main problem of philosophy is the question: What is being? τί τὸ ὄν.

(2) It is the phenomenon of time which supplies an answer to the question of the meaning of being.

(3) Being, as seen by the Greeks, is presence, παρουσία.

(1) It is impossible to deal with Heidegger's views on time and with his interpretation of the Greek views of time without previously introducing another problem, that of being. For this problem provides the field within which he tackles the problem of time, and it is precisely

the connection between being and time which gives to the problem of time an extraordinarily high rank in his philosophy.

All genuine philosophy, according to Heidegger, is ontology: the main, and strictly speaking, the only subject of philosophy is being, τὸ ὄν. And in this conviction he feels fully supported by Greek philosophy. Two passages will show that the Greek philosophers raised the problem, "What is being?" as their central one.

Aristotle, *Metaphysica,* Z 1, 1028 b 2-4: "And indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, viz., what being is, is just the question *what is substance?*" b 6-7: "And so we also must consider chiefly and primarily and almost exclusively what that is which *is* in this sense" (R).[1]

A corresponding statement is found in Plato's *Sophistes* 244 a: "Since, then, we are in a difficulty, please to tell us what you mean, when you speak of being. For there can be no doubt that you always from the first understood your own meaning, whereas we once thought that we understood you, but now we are in a great strait" (J). (It is the Eleatic stranger who is speaking to Theaetetus).

The passage from Plato deals with the same problem as the Aristotelian one, though it is inferior to it in methodological clearness. Also the consciousness of the central importance of this ontological question is less clearly expressed. Yet, Plato's work as a whole, and especially his later dialogues, leave no doubt, that the question, "What is being?" was also his central concern, though he develops it for the most part in a less abstract way than did Aristotle. A few points will show that Plato's philosophy is ontology.

In the earlier dialogues, we constantly find Socrates asking, "What is a shoemaker or a tailor?" meaning "What is he as a shoemaker, as a tailor, what is his essence, or what is the meaning of this special professional activity as such?" This seems easy and trivial. But when he goes on to ask in the same way, "What is a just man?" a difficulty presents itself, for to answer this question would mean to be able to tell what the very essence of justice is. It is, no doubt, from Plato's predominating interest in ethics and politics that this question arises, but at the same time and even within this very concern for the realization of true justice in the state, there appears his conviction of the importance of knowledge about justice in itself, the essence of justice, that which justice essentially is like, so to speak, what it looks like, its look — τὸ εἶδος. Plato's conception of ideas is the general answer he gave to the question τί τὸ ὄν, meaning, even if not formulating it in the Aristotelian

1. R = W. D. Ross' translation of Aristotle.
J = Jowett's translation of Plato.
C = Cornford's translation of the *Timaeus* in *Plato's Cosmology.*

way: τίς ἡ οὐσία. The later dialogues are more distinctly and more exclusively concerned with this problem. The *Eidos* is clearly understood as the superior and proper being. As everlasting it is contrasted with the changeable, the existing things. It is called the ὄντως ὄν, and as such it is the very cause of being for the concrete existing things. The *Eidos* brings it about that they, the manifold things, are ὄντα, be it by *Methexis* or by *Homoiosis* to the *Eidos*. It is justice by itself, the everlasting idea of justice by which this or that man or king, or this or that state, will become a just one. The *Eidos* or Idea is the unchangeable essence of the changeable thing which comes into existence and vanishes from existence.

There is no need to say that Aristotle's questioning is ontological just as clearly as is Plato's, if not more so. This means: the aim of his philosophy is to solve, or rather to ask again and again, the question, "What is being?" We know sufficiently that he too gives to the *Eidos* a central place, but, in contrast to Plato, he denies the separateness of the *Eidos* from the concrete things. This does not mean that the *Eidos* has become less important. The central role and also the task of the *Eidos* is retained. The *Eidos* is nowhere else than in the thing itself. Its very immanence in the existing and changeable thing makes it, according to Aristotle, essential to it. Separate from it, it could not bring forth anything, it could not be effective for the "many" as "beings." Now we know that this *Eidos* is, more precisely and more philosophically speaking, the *Ousia*. Though this difficult term undoubtedly has various meanings, here we have to deal with its central philosophical meaning: the "being-ness." To put it in another way: by understanding the *Eidos* as the *Ousia,* or by searching for an *Ousia*—a search to which the *Eidos* answers to a certain extent—Aristotle gives to the Platonic philosophy exactly that interpretation which we have given, namely that the role of the *Eidos* is ontological, that the dignity of the *Eidos* is based upon its ability to answer the central ontological question, "What is being?"

Greek philosophy is therefore ontology. It is a search for τὸ ὄν.

Heidegger again raises the old problem, "What is being?" and makes it the center of his philosophy. In everyday life, we do not put this question, and we hardly understand it as such. We believe ourselves to know what being is and means. Our speech, be it explicitly or in a hidden way, uses the verb "to be." We say that this paper *is* white, that there *are* a certain number of letters, etc. Thus speaking we understand what "is," "are," and the like mean. Even while we are silent, we act on the basis of an understanding of being and of "to be." This understanding which everybody possesses may be called the prephilosophical understanding of being. We are not interested in "is"

or "are" or "to be" as merely grammatical phenomena, we do not mean to deal with the so-called auxiliary verb "to be," the copula. This grammatical phenomenon is based on a central philosophical phenomenon, namely that human life as such, before science and philosophy, necessarily understands being and deals with it, so much and so naturally that, while we are thus living, we are hardly aware of this understanding of ours. Daily prephilosophical life as such, in living and acting, cannot and should not be aware of it, because, on the very basis of this understanding, it has to deal with this or that concrete thing, to handle this, to think of the next; and reflection on being itself would hinder life. It is, however, the philosopher's task to make being the subject of his considerations. Thus Heidegger distinguishes from the prephilosophical understanding of being which every man possesses and uses without thinking of it, the explicit, philosophical understanding of being. In the passage from the *Sophistes* which I have quoted, we find this contrast implied. The Eleatic stranger who is, in this dialogue, the representative of true philosophy in its highest rank, confesses that he formerly believed himself to understand what being meant—that is the natural prephilosophical understanding—but now, when philosophical questioning has begun, he no longer feels sure of his understanding of this little word "is" or "being;" he now feels the great difficulty, the "Aporia" which is hidden in this problem.

(2) To the first assertion, "All philosophy is a quest for the meaning of being," we shall now add a second assertion. This will, to a certain extent, answer the question raised in the first. The first assertion implies the question, "What is being?" To this the second assertion answers: "Being is time." What we mean by being somehow is time, or at least implies time.

The title of Heidegger's greatest published work reads *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)*. Simplifying a little, I may say: This "and" has the meaning of "is": being is time. Or, to put it more carefully: What being is can only be understood from the phenomenon of time and within its range. More generally speaking: It is always the phenomenon of time, though this may be seen in different ways, which provides the answer to the question, "What is being?"

Is Heidegger in agreement with any previous philosopher in this philosophical conviction? His thesis seems strange and entirely new. And it has certainly come to him not from historical knowledge but from philosophical insight. Yet, when once we have become familiar with this assertion and its meaning and then try to investigate, in its light, the history of philosophy, we do find that some insight into a

relation between time and being has existed before him.[2] Is he, then, in his assumption that being is time, in agreement with the Greeks? The answer is, yes and no. No, in so far as the Greeks did not make such an assertion. In the various passages in which the Greeks, especially Aristotle, ask what being is, there are many answers found or attempts at answering the question, but none of them says: Being is time. In the treatises on time the question of what time is, is asked explicity and different answers are given, but none of them reads: Time is being. The Greeks did not say expressly and did not know consciously that being was time.

Did they, then, unconsciously hold that being was time? Such is our conviction. This seems, at first sight, a most daring and highly controvertible statement. How can we know what the Greeks thought otherwise than by relying on what they said? Certainly an interpretation has to adhere to the texts. But the texts, if thoroughly read and understood, may reveal more about the author's thought than an author himself can expressly state. The language and trend of thought in Greek philosophy reveal to an attentive eye that ancient philosophy is pervaded by the basic though undiscussed assumption that being is time. A few passages in ancient philosophical literature will suffice to reveal a connection between being and time.

The first philosopher who makes the problem of being a central one, Parmenides, does not discuss time as an independent theme. The fact that temporal terms are contained in his description of "the Being" may be considered all the more significant. I cannot share the view that Parmenides' "One Being" is a material thing, a bodily sphere. His words "a well-rounded sphere" may well be understood as a simile. His One Being, rather than representing a primitive notion of a material thing, seems to be the first and most powerful abstraction of being. It should be interpreted in a perfectly abstract sense. It is certainly not an existing thing. It is the very essence of being which itself does not exist in the same manner as the manifold of existing things but constitutes the essence of their being. Or, rather, the One being is the abstraction of that character in the manifold things which makes us speak of them as "being." Now Parmenides emphasizes throughout his poem his main concern, i. e., that only this unique and uniform being is entitled to bear the name of true being; whereas the

2. It may be mentioned that Heidegger found, many years after having developed for himself the relation of time and being, that the same philosophical thought had been laid down as a central one in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. He has been able to show, in an exact and concise interpretation of this work that Kant, like himself, though under a different terminology, was equally in search of the meaning of being, and that, also like himself, Kant arrived at the discovery that it is the phenomenon time which answers this question. See Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*.

great number of existing things in their variety and with their perpetual change, their coming to be, and their passing away, cannot truly be called being. This sounds very much like Plato who attributes to "the many" a kind of being definitely inferior to the being represented by the Ideas. Parmenides, however, entirely possessed by his vision of the One Being, calls the manifoldness of things altogether untrue, non-being.[3] He insists that philosophical thought is bound to keep in sight nothing else than the one unchangeable and indivisible being, namely the conception of being itself.

Now in this fragment 8 which gives the fullest account of the One Being, we read (v. 5): "It never was nor ever will be since it *is, now* all at once." That is to say: Parmenides, although he does not intend to discuss time, but solely the One Being, cannot help implying in its description a temporal characterization. It is the "it is" which has to be attached to true being; the "it was" and the "it will be" have to be banished from it.

The basis of this Parmenidean verdict is the assumption that true being is identical with what is *present* or with *presence*. That which is present or presence as such does justice to what is meant by being, whereas the "was" and "will be" do not suffice, not fulfilling the implicitly intended meaning of being. Past and future are banished far away from being, since both indicate something which is not present, the former what is no longer present and the latter what is not yet present. Coming to be and passing away are excluded from the One Being because they imply a lack of presence.

There is hardly any need to emphasize how strongly this statement of Parmenides' recalls a Platonic passage, found in the middle of his discussion of time *(Tim.* 37 E). Having mentioned the "was" and "will be," Plato adds: "We are wrong to transfer them unthinkingly to eternal being." "We say that it was and is and shall be, but 'is' alone really belongs to it and describes it truly" (C).

If we keep in mind that the "Eternal Being" *(Aidios Ousia)* of which Plato speaks here, is the *Eidos* (or the plurality of *Eide)* and furthermore that the *Eide* represent for Plato true being, we shall realize that we find here an entirely exact parallel to the Parmenidean fragment. Both quotations illustrate the assertion: *True being was understood as presence.*

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3. In some of his utterances Plato seems to take the same extreme view as Parmenides, e. g., *Tim.* 27 D, where he distinguishes sharply from that "which is always being and has no becoming" that "which is always becoming and *never being.*" But in the very sentence that follows he expresses the same contrast more precisely by opposing to that "which is always unchangeably being" now, in a more careful formulation, that "which becomes and passes away but is never being *in a beingly way.*" For this rendering of ὄντως ὄν see below, p. 180.

We find a similar reflection in St. Augustine, though his consideration begins from the opposite end of the problem *(Conf.,* Book XI). Discussing time (not being), he doubts whether time really has existence or whether we should deny it being altogether. The reason is that no part of time actually seems to exist. The past "nows" are no longer, the future "nows" are not yet in existence. Thus taking his orientation, as had Parmenides and Plato, along these three characters of time, the *erat, erit,* and *est,* St. Augustine feels sure that the *erat* and *erit,* these two parts of time, cannot truly be. Only that "est" has existence.[4]

Obviously, being and existence mean presence.

The first assertion was: Greek philosophy is ontology, search for the meaning and essence of being. The second assertion answered, to a certain extent, the question implied in the first, "What is being?" by stating: The essence of being is time. Or, in the idea of being a certain notion of time is implied.

(3) Now we shall be aware that what has been illustrated by the quotations is actually not only the content of our second assertion but at the same time the content of the third: Being means presence. What the ancient philosophers meant by being was time seen solely in one of its characters, time understood as the present, the now.[5]

In this thesis, however, "Being is the present," or "Being is presence," we shall find something more implied: the problem of eternity. When St. Augustine has arrived at the conclusion that the present alone, of all parts of time, possesses existence, he suddenly doubts whether this present, the *nunc,* is really time, or whether it may not easily appear as the very opposite of time, namely as eternity. "If the present were always present and would not pass away into the past, then already the present would not be time but eternity" *(Conf.,* Book XI, ch. 14).

Of all the parts of time, only the present has been found to be

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4. We find the same argument mentioned in Aristotle's treatise on time, although merely as a popular argument *(Phys.,* IV, 10, 217 b 33-34, 218 a 5). Nor does it represent for St. Augustine the final conclusion, yet it is significant that St. Augustine takes it up, and, moreover, he gives to this particular problem a characteristic solution (cf. my "Notes on Van Helmont, *De Tempore," Osiris,* in press, note on § 14) by referring eventually to memory and anticipation in which also past and future have existence. It will easily be seen that this solution does not invalidate our assertion that he shares the Greek view that being is presence, on the contrary, it marks this view all the more clearly.

Our scanty remarks on St. Augustine do not purport to give an account of his contribution to the philosophy of time. In the limits of our subject, merely those points can be mentioned which show him in agreement with the Greek assumptions. That these are valid for him also, though he is laboring towards a decidedly different conception of time, shows how firm these ancient assumptions stood, and how difficult they were to overcome.

5. To say it more generally in Greek terms: The idea intended whenever ὄν and οὐσία are pronounced or understood, is properly fulfilled by what is a παρόν, or by παρουσία. Also the term ὑπάρχειν means the same and is frequently used, in Plato and Aristotle, interchangeably with εἶναι. So we state: εἶναι means ὑπάρχειν, to be there, present. And οὐσία indicates παρουσία. This is the content of the third assertion.

compatible with the idea of being. This present, however, if it were lasting in its presence (as should actually be, if past and future were excluded as not being) would no longer be time but eternity.[6]

Both eternity and time (as appearing on the horizon of Greek ontology) are based on the "now," or both are presence. That is the reason why, in spite of the interpretation of time and eternity as opposites (which is one way of interpreting them) we find St. Augustine so easily passing over from time to eternity, saying the "est," if only it would last, would already be eternity. We know the same from the Timaeus-passage: the "is" belongs to both, to time and eternity.

The assertion that by being the Greeks meant time, has turned out to mean, more precisely: Being, as understood by the Greks, is presence. But this assertion again seems to have changed and now appears to mean: What they meant by being is eternity. It should, however, be realized, that this is not a new thesis, it is still the same which we have put down as our third assertion: being, for the Greeks, meant presence. For eternity is nothing else than lasting, present existence, or lasting presence. The quality of lasting does not add any new and foreign character to the idea of being present. The lasting is nothing else than the perfection of what is implied in the idea of presence. If being means presence, then it follows naturally that that which is most present, and this is that which is always present and never loses or drops its presence, will be being in its fullest sense. Lasting presence will most completely, indeed perfectly answer to what the prephilosophical understanding of being had unconsciously meant. From this it should be understood why Plato considered the everlasting realm of ideas as τὸ ὄντως ὄν, that is, that which is "being in the most beingly way." If being means presence, then being in a beingly way, and this is perfect being, must be found in everlasting presence, in that which by its nature is safe against any change, and this means against any loss of presence. In contrast to this, the things which are becoming are, it is true, present for some time, but they have come into presence out of non-presence, and they will go back into non-presence. Being in the most beingly way, ὄντως ὄν, can only be found with the ἀεὶ ὄντα. True being, then, is identical with eternal being. This is indeed what both Plato and Aristotle will tell us again and again. The difference between these two philosophers, however great, lies beyond this problem. What separates Aristotle from Plato is his vigorous denial of the Platonic *Chorismos*. He refuses to believe in the *Eide* as being separate from the manifoldness of concrete things and as dwelling in "a place beyond Heavens."

6. We see here the source from which has arisen the later medieval conception of eternity as the "nunc stans," the lasting, present now. The *nunc temporis* is passing away, whereas eternity is a remaining immovable now.

Yet the underlying conviction that being means presence, and that, therefore, true being is to be found in everlasting presence as represented by "the eternal beings," the *Eide,* is common to both philosophers. In other words, both Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies are fundamentally based on the conviction that true being is eternity.

I find this ancient conviction that the meaning of being is identical with the idea of eternity, most strikingly expressed in Plotinus' treatise "On Eternity and Time" *(Enneade* 3, Treat. 7). This is shown in the following sentences from its sixth chapter which will now need no further comment.

"For to be truly, is 'never not to be' nor to be otherwise. But this is to be invariably the same and this is to be without diversity." And, when speaking of the *Aion:* "The *is* is the truest of all the things about it, and its very self and this in such a way as to be beingness. . . " And further on: "When in our speech we utter this 'always' and this *'not* at-one-time-being-at-another-time-not-being,' it is requisite to think that we thus speak for the sake of perspicuity. For possibly the 'always' is not properly in its place here[7]. . . We might perhaps prefer to use the word 'being' only (namely without the attribute 'always'). But as 'being' is a name applicable to beingness, yet since some believe that genesis also is beingness, it is requisite for the sake of understanding to add the term 'always' (or everlasting). There is, indeed, no difference between a philosopher and a true philosopher: the attribute 'true' came into use because there arose what was disguised as philosophy, and for similar reasons, always was adjoined to being, and being to always, and we have the tautology of always-being. Hence we must take the 'always' as expressing no more than true being."

The result is that being, for the Greeks, meant presence and that, therefore, the most perfect presence represented for them being in its most perfect degree, and that they thought indeed of eternity (which is present unfailingly) as identical with pure being.

The idea of eternity, then, is obviously a temporal concept, meaning pure presence, παρουσία.

It still remains to state expressly what time it. If being is eternity, and eternity is the remaining, everlasting and immovable "is," what then is time?

The answer is that time, as seen by the Greeks, is the non-lasting "is," that "is" which will not endure but passes away, and is immediately succeeded by another "is," this again by another, and so on in an infinite process. Time, then, is understood as a succession of nows.

7. The present author has interpreted this Plotinus text in "A Note on a Passage in Plotinus' 'On Eternity and Time,'" *Classical Philology,* vol. XXXVI, No. 3, July, 1941, pp. 230-9.

This implies both the similarity and the contrast between time and eternity. Both phenomena mean presence, and both mean it as going on forever. But whereas the eternal has its essence in keeping free from all change, all divisibility and succession (because these characters would mean a loss of presence), time, on the contrary, is essentially succession. Thus the Greeks approach time from the horizon of presence, yet time appears to them as the very deficiency of presence. Time is deficient in face of the eternal.

This is indeed the idea of time which Plato sets forth in the *Timaeus* where he says in a myth that time has been created by the Demiurge, along with the creation of the world, as the image of eternal being, as like to it as possible. Time could not possibly be entirely like its eternal model. This image of eternity, time, is seen by Plato as represented by the continually revolving celestial bodies which indicate time to mankind by causing the change of day and night, and the periods of months and years. This celestial revolution, though going on forever, is distinguished from the true eternal in that it possesses succession and number. The Demiurge, says Plato, "made of Eternity that abides in unity, an everlasting likeness, moving according to number—that to which we have given the name of Time" (C; *Tim.* 37 D). The eternal being itself is "in one," there are no parts and therefore no possible succession, and this means: no before and after, and so there is nothing to be counted and numbered.[8]

Aristotle, who followed Plato in the main conception of what he meant by time, was anxious to interpret the same phenomenon more precisely, and he therefore found fault with his predecessors for having identified time either with the universe itself or with its revolution. He rectified Plato's statements in two points: (1) Time is not connected only with the motion of the heavens but with any motion whatsoever. (2) Time is not motion itself; neither is it that heavenly motion which indicates time to us most conspicuously, nor is time identical with any other motion nor with motion in general. But time is somehow connected with motion in general. Time is, so to speak, "something implied in the phenomenon of motion" (*Phys.* IV, 11, 219 a 3). Aristotle's attempts at stating what exactly this "something" is, finally arrive at formulating that definition which has become famous throughout the centuries: "Time is the number of change in respect of before and after" (R; 219 b 1).

8. The Latin language has distinguished these two kinds of "always" found in eternity and in time respectively, by calling the true eternal—which, in medieval philosophy, was identified with God—*æternitas,* whereas its image, time, is described by *sempiternitas,* everlastingness, going on successively forever. The Greeks comprehended both in the single term ἀεί or α'ἴδιος, though the difference is fully understood as we have seen in the sentence just quoted.

Both philosopher's conceptions of time, however different the framework and the atmosphere of their respective discussions,[9] are in full agreement on the following points. Both of them see time from the ontological horizon which understands being as presence, and both conceive of time as the succession of nows. Understanding succession as such implies counting and measuring. In the view of both these philosophers, time measures motion and is measurable by motion. Time, thus seen, is fundamentally bound up with motion and change, or with genesis in its widest sense. Time, then, is that *in which* all motion and change *occurs*. Motion and change, however, are the special characteristics of the *Kosmos,* the world of becoming, in contrast to the eternal, unchangeable being. In the *Timaeus* not only does time appear as the imperfect image of the eternal but the same is said of the *Kosmos* itself. The universe itself, in its structure, is as similar to the model as possible. The likeness of the *Kosmos,* including its deficiency in face of the eternal, is incorporated in its being bound up with time. The temporality of the *Kosmos* is the very phenomenon on account of which the *Kosmos* appears to be both a copy of eternity and inferior to it. Time, then, shares the character of deficiency which is ascribed to the whole world of becoming things in contrast to the eternal, the perfect being.

The eternal being, in this ontology, is the perfect being, and is the model in comparison with which both world and time are found deficient.

However, the question will arise: Does there exist any other possibility of interpreting the phenomena being and time? The answer to this will be given by an examination of our three assertions as to whether they hold good for every possible philosophical view.

(1) The assertion that all philosophy is a search for the meaning of being is meant as an entirely general thesis. It applies to the task of all philosophy.

(2) Does the assertion, "What is meant by being is time" apply to all philosophy, or is it true of the Greeks only? Can the general question of philosophy be given any answer other than that which will appear from the horizon of time?

We stated before that Heidegger makes time the center of his philosophy and, moreover, that this central position of time in his system is due to the fact that time supplies the clue to the meaning of being. This, then, also seems in agreement with the Greeks. Yet, the

9. For finding our way through Plato's and Aristotle's discussions of time we have the best possible help in Professor Cornford's translation and commentary on the *Timæus, Plato's Cosmology,* and in Professor W. D. Ross' edition of Aristotle's *Physics* with analysis and commentary.

ways in which time answers the ontological questions in Greek philosophy and in Heidegger's respectively, differ widely.

(3) This will be seen clearly when we proceed to consider the third assertion, namely, that being is seen as presence. We have to state that this applies to the Greeks, and from there has been handed down to later generations and is still fully alive in Hegel's philosophical system. This Greek ontological foundation, however, does not correspond to the inner tendency of modern philosophy. Heidegger opposes fundamentally the assumption that being is presence, and that, accordingly, true being is found in eternity, whereas all finite things, movable in time, are considered as deficient for the reason that they lack eternal presence.

He finds the original and full phenomenon of time in human life itself. This does not mean the natural fact that life, like all other processes, occurs and passes away *in time*. This time *in which* processes occur seems to him derived from an original temporality, or, as we might render his term, from the original phenomenon of "timeness" *(Zeitlichkeit)* which is man's life in his world. Timeness is not a linear succession of nows and is in no way quantitative.[10] In it future and past are most relevant and pervade each other in a living and indissoluble unity to produce every present moment. This needs further elucidation.

We have seen that the Greek conception of time which has remained the common one throughout tradition, meant a succession of nows. Since these are continuously coming into being and passing away, they lack full presence and are therefore found deficient in contrast to eternal being, i. e., eternal presence. Past and future, in this view of time, did not seem truly to be. They are conceived of merely as that which has formerly been present and that which will later on be present. In other words, past and future are seen here merely as passing through the present.

In contrast to this Heidegger asserts that the original phenomenon of time, "timeness," is not presence. Timeness is not a succession of nows and not succession at all, nor does it bear a quantitative and mathematical character. Timeness is neither measure nor measurable. Since it is not a "flowing now" and not in any way a now-time, it will not be considered deficient as compared to eternal presence.

What, then, is timeness, if not presence? Timeness is nothing else than the essence of human life or human existence. This can be char-

10. This recalls Bergson's concept of time, though this is, in contrast to Heidegger's, a biological concept. A somewhat similar criticism of succession and of quantitative views of time is found in a seventeenth century biological thinker whose *De Tempore* is the subject of a joint paper by Walter Pagel and the present author, *Osiris,* in press.

acterized, among other characters, by a "being able-to-be." Indeed, to be, as a potentiality, more than as actualized, belongs essentially to man's nature. Heidegger points out that it is this feature that underlies the Delphic instruction: "Become what thou art!" Man "is" always some of his potentialities to his very being even if they will never in any future "now" actually be present. The fact that potentialities are continuously "not yet" actualized does not imply any deficiency. This "not yet" rather indicates a positive power of man.

In a similar way man's past is not something which once was present and then has vanished, but something towards which he can assume various attitudes as acceptance, preservation, but also forgetfulness. In his "having-been," that is, in man's attitude towards his past, Heidegger finds the main basis for man's "mood" or "feeling" which is one of the essential elements of his existence. Here past and future are given their full interpretation instead of being confined to the view they offer from the perspective of the present. Past, future, and present, playing their role together, constitute the essence of man and his life. There is no rolling-up or succession of homogeneous parts in this original time-phenomenon, rather a most intimate integration of three different phenomena constituting, as a unity, timeness.

How does this view of time affect the interpretation of being?

Timeness creates and determines that which "is present" to man and, indeed, all that which "is." Thus it determines not only man's own being but also the being of the "world," of all that is around him. Man in his world, from Heidegger's ontological basis, is one inseparable phenomenon, for man (as timeness) is by nature "ecstatic," i. e., is always more than a mere subject,[11] it comprises "his world." It is due to the activity of timeness that we conceive of a world and of being. The attitude of man towards the various elements of timeness is, at the same time, his understanding of being. And only for one who does, by nature, live in the way of timeness, and this implies understanding being, does there exist being and a world in an explicit way. For an animal or a plant there is, truly speaking, no "being," because they lack the faculty of understanding being. Timeness and understanding of being—and this implies the constitution of being as such—are one and the same phenomenon. This characterizes man's being as distinct from an animal and also from a god.

The animal lacking speech, and this means lacking explicit under-

11. Heidegger therefore objects to the misinterpretation of his philosophy as anthropocentrism *(Vom Wesen des Grundes,* p. 30, n.). The assertion that timeness is the "center" is rightly understood only if we keep in mind the intention toward finding a basis for the understanding of being. The central ontological place of timeness does not contradict the "nothingness" *(Nichtigkeit)* of man within the whole of being. For the conception of "world" cf. *op. cit.,* pp. 14 ff., esp. pp. 26 ff.

standing of being, is, in this respect and, as it were, ontologically speaking, below man: the task and possibility of living through the various activities of timeness are not given to it. Therefore it shares neither in man's highest potentialities nor in man's specific dangers which can make man fall below the range of an animal.

Nor does a god live the life of timeness. He does not share in the specifically human way of understanding being because he need not open up for himself an understanding of being through timeness.

As far as all things, animals, plants, and inanimate things and their processes, are and occur "in time," this time is the world-time but not the phenomenon of timeness, which according to Heidegger, is the center of the time-phenomenon. The world-time in which processes occur is a derivative phenomenon depending upon timeness and upon the existence of man who is timeness. There is no question of whether time was before and will be after man existed. For where there is no one to conceive of time, time is not (as has been seen already by Aristotle). The clock-time which seems so "objective" is derived, in Heidegger's view, from timeness, and timeness is only where man exists. Man's existence is a complicated phenomenon of time activities. From these arise his own being as well as the being of a world around him.

To summarize the contrast between the modern view and the traditional views of being and time:

The traditional idea understood being as eternal presence or being as eternity and, therefore, time as imperfect being. Everything in time is perishable and hence, lacking eternal being, is a being of a second order.

This secondariness has, in Greek philosophy, its ontological reasons. It has sprung from the thought of the Greeks, because to them being meant eternal presence.

This is maintained in Christian philosophy. The Greek ontological horizon remains unaltered. The secondariness of all temporal things suits the theological basis of this era: that God is the perfect being.

Heidegger tries to give expression to the feeling of our generation by an interpretation of man and world which is free from any theological implication. Time, world, and being are here not interpreted from the standpoint of eternity, but the attempt is made to interpret them directly from the phenomena themselves. Philosophy should attempt a view of man and world without the hypothesis (be it explicit or hidden) that God is the perfect being, the measure of the degree of perfection in other beings and that God represents altogether the basis for what being means. It should keep equally free from the point of view of the Greeks who, though untheological and without the distinction between

God the creator and the things created, were the first to make the implicit hypothesis, arising from their own natural ontology, that perfect being is eternal presence. In contrast to both, Heidegger tries to interpret man in his world from the phenomenon itself. He believes that neither God nor any permanent being, but man, should be the center and starting-point of philosophy (and philosophy, for him also, means interpretation of being). The reason is that world is understood to exist by man only. This understanding of being arises—and that is Heidegger's central thesis—from man's existence as timeness.

Thus this philosophy, while restoring man to his true place, liberates the phenomenon of time also from the mark of deficiency and secondariness. Time becomes the primary and central philosophical phenomenon alongside of being. It is the phenomenon of timeness from which an understanding of being in a universal sense arises, and from which also arises the explanation of that derivative phenomenon of time which we have met as world-time, the time in which all world-processes occur.

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